

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 10 and 16 are canceled, and claims 1-3 and 11-14 are amended. In particular, claims 1-3 and 11-14 are amended to include the feature previously recited in claims 10 and 16, respectively. Accordingly, claims 1-9, 11-15 and 17-18 are pending in this application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,894,306 to Ichimura. Although the Office Action lists only claims 1-16, claims 17 and 18 are specifically addressed. Therefore, Applicants assume that the Office Action intended to reject claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 5,894,306 to Ichimura. This rejection is moot with respect to canceled claims 10 and 16, and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Each of independent claims 1-3 and 11-14 is amended to include the feature "said transmission line comprising an IEEE-1394 bus," which was previously recited in claims 10 and 16. The Office Action rejected claims 10 and 16 by asserting that the transmission line comprising an IEEE-1394 bus is disclosed in col. 6, lines 50-55 of Ichimura. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The cited portion of Ichimura discloses that "it is also possible to connect the device to a network using ISDN via a personal computer. This allows the audio data and image data from the meeting to be shared simultaneously with a remote site. This provides an environment which gives an illusion that the meeting is being conducted in a single room." This passage clearly discloses that the devices are connected to the network using ISDN, not IEEE-1394. One of ordinary skill in the art would not interpret ISDN to include IEEE-1394, as ISDN is a protocol using telephone lines to transmit digital data between telephone modems, and IEEE-1394 is a communications interface standard between devices communicating on a dedicated cable.

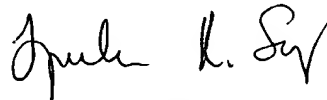
Nowhere in Ichimura is it disclosed that the data transmission occurs via an IEEE-1394 bus. As this feature was previously under consideration, Applicants submit that no new issue is raised by the amendment of claims 1-3 and 11-14 to include this feature.

Claims 4-9 depend from claim 3, claim 15 depends from claim 14, and claims 17-18 depend from claim 1. Therefore, claims 4-9, 15 and 17-18 are patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 3, 14 and 1, respectively, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-9, 11-15 and 17-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9, 11-15 and 17-18 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jaquelin K. Spong
Registration No. 52,241

JAO:JKS/al

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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